

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 01148 01 OF 02 231447Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 HA-05 /073 W
-----131029 231503Z /43

P R 231335Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7393
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 1148

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SHUM ELAB EC
SUBJ: PRESIDENT POVEDA DISCUSSES INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT POVEDA TOLD CHARGE FEBRUARY 22 THAT ECUADOREAN DOMESTIC SITUATION REMAINED CALM EVEN AFTER BUCARAM'S DISQUALIFICATION AND CREATED NO NEED FOR ECUADOR TO DISTRACT ATTENTION BY FABRICATING PROBLEMS WITH PERU. POVEDA SAID THAT CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE OVER WITHIN 10 MONTHS. HE ALSO ANALYZED CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A FEBRUARY 22 DISCUSSION BETWEEN CHARGE AND ADMIRAL ALFREDO POVEDA, PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL CONCERNING THE SITUATION WITH PERU (SEPTOL), POVEDA ATTEMPTED TO GIVE LIE TO PERUVIAN CHARGES THAT ECUADOR WAS ENGAGING IN PROVOCATIONS BECAUSE OF ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION, HE DEFENDED THE GOE'S MOTIVES IN EXCLUDING ASSAD BUCARAM FROM THE PRESIDENCY AND DISCUSSED THE REMAINDER OF THE RETORNO CALENDAR.

3. POVEDA SAID THAT THE POLITICAL PANORAMA WAS AS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01148 01 OF 02 231447Z

SERENE AS IT HAS EVER BEEN. THE REFERENDUM WAS A SUCCESS, AND DESPITE SOME NUMEROUS STATEMENTS OF POLITICANS CITED IN THE PRESS ABOUT THE EXCLUSION OF BUCARAM, THE SITUATION WAS TRANQUIL. HE RECOGNIZED THE NEED OF POLITICANS TO PUT THEMSELVES ON RECORD AS OPPOSING THE GOE'S DISQUALIFICATION DECISION, EVEN THOUGH SOME WHO WERE DENOUNCING THE MOVE PUBLICLY WERE THE

VERY ONES WHO HAD BEEN REQUESTING THE GOE TO TAKE THE STEP FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

4. THE ARMED FORCES, HE CONTINUED, WERE NOT OPPOSED TO BUCARAM BECAUSE OF HIS IDEOLOGY OR BECAUSE OF THE WAY HE LOOKS. IT WAS CONSIDERED, HOWEVER, THAT THE CHANGE OVER TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT REQUIRED A PRESIDENT WHO WAS SENSIBLE, MODERATE AND BALANCED. BUCARAM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS IRRESPONSIBLE AND IMPRUDENT. THE ARMED FORCES HAD ENGAGED IN COUP D'ETAT TO BLOCK BUCARAM IN 1972, AND THERE WAS UNANIMITY AMONG THE HIGH COMMAND THAT HE SHOULD BE DENIED THIS TIME AS WELL. POVEDA ADDED THAT THERE WERE ALSO GENUINE DOUBTS ABOUT BUCARAM'S BIRTHPLACE. BUCARAM'S EXCLUSION IS THE ONLY THING THAT HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED FROM WHAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMISSIONS RECOMMENDED, AND HIS DISQUALIFICATION IS CONTAINED IN A TRANSITORY PROVISION. CHARGE COMMENTED ON ELECTION PROCESS ALONG LINES OF REF STATE 041780.

5. POVEDA POINTED TO THE ABSENCE OF ANY SERIOUS DOMESTIC CONFLICT AT THE PRESENT TIME AS INDICATING THAT ECUADOR WAS ENJOYING AN ERA OF ALMOST UNPRECEDENTED DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY. HE SINGLED OUT THE ABSENCE OF LABOR PROBLEMS AS SPECIAL EVIDENCE OF THIS. DEFENSE MINISTER ARRATA WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT CHIMED IN THAT IT WAS ABSURD TO THINK THAT ECUADOR WOULD BE ACTIVELY PROVOKING PERU
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 01148 01 OF 02 231447Z

INTO A POSSIBLE WAR BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WHICH DID NOT EXIST. POVEDA ENTONED THAT THE PRESENT IS CALM AND THE POLITICAL FUTURE LOOKS EXCEEDINGLY BRIGHT.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THE CHARGES QUESTION ABOUT THE TIMETABLE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE RETORNO PROCESS (THE ONLY DATE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED IS THE JULY 16 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS), POVEDA REPLIED THAT THE ARMED FORCES DID NOT WISH TO MAKE THE SCHEDULE PUBLIC, BUT JUDGED IT IMPORTANT FOR THE USG TO KNOW. HE SAID THAT IF THERE IS A MAJORITY WINNER IN THE JULY 16 ELECTIONS, THE CHANGEOVER IN GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE PLACE ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 9 (GUAYAQUIL INDEPENDENCE DAY). IF A RUNOFF IS NECESSARY, THE NEXT PRESIDENT WILL BE INAUGURATED ON DECEMBER 6 (QUITO DAY).

7. CHARGE RAISED THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY AS THEY CONCERNED THE FATE OF IMPRISONED OR SENTENCED LABOR LEADERS. POVEDA ADMITTED THAT GOE HAD BEEN DISPOSED TO ACT SEVERELY AGAINST THE TEACHERS BECAUSE OF THEIR PAST HISTORY OF STRIKES, UNNEGOTIABLE DEMANDS, AND COMMUNIST INFILTRATION. THEIR NATIONAL STRIKE LAST MAY WAS

CLEARLY ILLEGAL, IN THE SENSE THAT IT VIOLATED A CONGRESSIONAL STATUTE, AND NOBODY HAD CHALLENGED GOE ON THIS POINT. AS FOR THE SENTENCING PROCEDURE, POVEDA SAID FLATLY THAT IT WAS ADOPTED AS A HANDLY EXPEDIENT TO RESOLVE AN IMMEDIATE SITUATION. DESPITE THIS, THERE WAS STILL RECOURSE TO THE NORMAL JUDICIAL CHANNELS AND HE CLAIMED THAT THOSE SENTENCED HAD NOT EXHAUSTED ALL LEGAL REMEDIES. AS FOR THE REST OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, POVEDA DECLARED THAT THERE WERE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND THAT THERE WAS LESS POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON THE JUDICIARY THAN AT ANY TIME IN ECUADOREAN HISTORY. HE ALLOWED HOWEVER, THAT THE GOE WOULD CONTINUE TO APPLY EXTRA-LEGAL PRESSURE TO AVOID POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONFLICTS SUCH AS THE RECENT BUS STRIKE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 QUITO 01148 01 OF 02 231447Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 01148 02 OF 02 231430Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 HA-05 /073 W
-----130857 231503Z /43

P R 231335Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7394
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 1148

8. COMMENT: POVEDA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IS, ALLOWING FOR A CERTAIN OBVIOUS BIAS ON HIS PART, NOT FAR FROM OUR OWN. THERE IS LITTLE OR NO REASON FOR ECUADOR TO LOOK FOR A FIGHT WITH PERU AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS.

9. GOE IS PROBABLY RELUCTANT TO PUBLICIZE ITS FULL
RETORNO CALENDAR BECAUSE MOST ECUADOREANS DESIRE AND
EXPECT THE MILITARY TO LEAVE A FEW MONTHS SOONER THAN
THE PROBABLE DECEMBER DEADLINE. HOWEVER, THE ALLOWANCE
OF A TWO MONTH RUN-OFF CAMPAIGN AND A THREE MONTH LAME
DUCK PERIOD, WHILE SEEMINGLY UNJUSTIFIED BY NECESSITY,
DOES NOT SEEM OUT OF LINE WITH TRADITIONAL PRACTICE
HERE AND ELSEWHERE.

10. POVEDA'S COMMENTS ABOUT POSSIBLE JUDICIAL REMEDY
FOR THE TEACHERS MAY JUST HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE DEFENSE OF GOE
POLICY OR IT COULD HINT AT A POSSIBLE WAY OUT OF THE
STALEMATE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND UNION. EMB HAS INDIRECTLY
NOTIFIED THE TEACHERS' UNION SO THAT IT CAN EXPLORE THE
LATTER POSSIBILITY.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 01148 02 OF 02 231430Z

CORR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978QUITO01148
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780084-0302
Format: TEL
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780222/aaaaascz.tel
Line Count: 192
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3d4508d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3504392
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT POVEDA DISCUSSES INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, ELAB, EC, (POVEDA BURBANO, ALFREDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d4508d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014